

In the case of their *S. c. suabelicus*, study of specimens from Lindi and Mikindani, Southern Province, Tanzania, and from many parts of Moçambique reveals that this is *S. c. cryptoleucus*, the range of which was recently modified in Clancey (1969). The range of *suabelicus* ("shimba") as given by Ripley and Heinrich now requires to be extended south to include north-eastern Tanzania south to about 7° S. lat., while that of *cryptoleucus* ("*suabelicus*") will be from the coastal lowland of the Southern Province, Tanzania, south through Moçambique to north-eastern Zululand and the Lebombo Mountains.

The populations present in the southern highlands of Tanzania appear to be *S. c. albigularis* Hartert, 1904: Canhoca, Cuanza Norte, Angola, though I have been unable to establish this with any degree of assurance, as I have not examined an adult ♀ from the region. In the race *albigularis*, the crown of the ♀ in other than very fresh dress is black like that of the ♂, and the sexes are indistinguishable. In the case of the ♀ of *S. c. suabelicus*, the crown is streaked, the feather shaft-streaks sepia, edged laterally with dark olive-brown, resulting in an almost uniform dark facies. In *cryptoleucus* the streaking is in sharp relief, with the dark shaft-streaking contrasted against grey lateral edging.

Acknowledgment: I am extremely grateful to Dr. G. Mauersberger of the Ornithological Department of the Institut für Spezielle Zoologie und Zoologisches Museum, Berlin, for the loan of the type of *S. c. suabelicus* and other material used by Hermann Grote in his studies.

References:

- Clancey, P. A. 1963. Miscellaneous Taxonomic Notes on African Birds. XX, *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. vi, 19: 231-241.
 — 1969. A Catalogue of Birds of the South African Sub-Region. Suppl. 1. *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. viii, 16: 293.
 Grote, H. 1926. Kurse Mitteilungen, *Ornith. Monatsber.*, vol. xxxiv, 1: 17, 18.;
 Ridgway, R. 1912. *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*. Washington.
 Ripley, S. D. & G. Heinrich. 1969. Comments on the Avifauna of Tanzania, II, *Postilla* (Peabody Museum Yale University), No. 134; 12-17.
 van Someren, V.G.L. 1941. Two new Races of *Smithornis capensis* (Eurylaimidae) from Kenya Colony. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, vol. lxii: 35-37.

The original description by H. O. Forbes of the extinct New Zealand Musk Duck *Biziura delautouri*

by Graham S. Cowles

Received 5th October, 1970

In a recent paper, Harrison & Walker (1970) agreed with Scarlett (1969) in recognizing that a subfossil bone, a tarsometatarsus, collected in New Zealand some eighty years ago by H. O. Forbes and referred to since then as *Biziura lautouri*, differed only slightly in size from the still living Australian Musk Duck *B. lobata*, and subsequently after examination they identified it as belonging to this latter species. It was further considered, as Scarlett (*loc. cit.*) had also suggested, that the species *B. lautouri* was invalid as a name and should be regarded as being a *nomen nudum* due to the lack of any evidence to support a precise type locality and in the absence of any information to establish which bone was originally determined as the type element. In reaching this last conclusion all three authors have agreed with Lambrecht (1933).

Scarlett (*loc. cit.*) states: "In The Transactions of the New Zealand Institute, Vol. 24 p. 188, H. O. Forbes mentions a bone, or bones, of *Biziura* without

specifying which bone he had, or its locality. The latter is, presumably Enfield Swamp." Harrison & Walker (*loc. cit.*) state: "He [Forbes] gave no description or illustration—indeed, he did not even state which bone or bones were represented—and he mentioned no more precise locality." On the assumption that there is no evidence appertaining to the type material, all four authors were correct in suggesting that the name *B. lautouri* be made unavailable, as indeed it is, but not only for that reason.

What has been sadly overlooked is the remark made by Hildegard Howard who, in writing the section dealing with the fossil Anseriformes in Delacour (1964, 4, p. 320) clearly draws attention to the fact that the reference, *Trans. N.Z.Inst.*, 1892 (or 1891, as incorrectly cited by Lambrecht, *loc. cit.*), is *not* the original type description, although recent authors assume that it is and still use it as such. This erroneous and vague "type" description was only an abstract of a preliminary note, as the title indicates, read by Forbes before a meeting of the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, New Zealand, on 1st October, 1891, but it was not published in the *Trans. N.Z.Inst.* (for 1891) until May 1892. The month of publication is important as it is antedated by two earlier and enlarged accounts of the same fossil find written by Forbes for *Nature*, 3rd March, 1892 and repeated in *Science*, 18th March, 1892. The appearance in print some two months earlier than the publication of the Transactions permits the article in *Nature* to be accepted into the nomenclature and constitutes a valid type description. The article not only gives a most precise collecting locality, but also designates an excavated "[tarso] metatarsus" as the type element. Of great interest is the different spelling used by Forbes for the proposed new species; *B. delantouri*, not *B. lautouri* as appears in the later invalid account, perhaps due to a printer's error. From the article in *Nature* it is made quite certain that Forbes *did* assign his new name to the fossil bone because of the recognizable difference in size (see Harrison & Walker, 1970 p. 8), for Forbes records ". . . crania of *A. australis*, are among the bones recovered at Enfield, in addition to the metatarsus of a *Biziura*, somewhat larger than *Biziura lobata*, the musk duck of Australia, an interesting species for which I have proposed the name of *Biziura de Lautouri* [sic] after the gentleman to whom I am indebted for the acquisition of these bones".

The type locality is quite definite. Forbes commences his article; "A deposit of Moa bones, larger than has been found for many years, has just been discovered near the town of Oamaru, in the province of Otago, in the South Island of this colony . . . The site of the deposit was at Enfield, some ten miles to the north-west of the town, on ground elevated several hundred feet above the level of the sea, in a shallow bayleted hollow, into which the unbroken surface of the expansive slope gently descending from the Kurow hills to the open vale of the Waireka (a stream that rises further to the west) has sunk here for some seven to eight feet below the general level, and which, proceeding with a gentle gradient valleywards, becomes a ditch-like conduit for a tributary of the Waireka. In the centre of this depression, which does not exceed 10 to 12 yards in width, the ground was of a dark brown colour, damp and peaty . . ."

Forbes did not record whether the subfossil bone was from a right or left leg, but as there is no evidence of any other fossil *Biziura* tarsometatarsus existing in his collection, apart from this one, the bone now in the British Museum (Natural History), registered number A.1504, is assumed by 'indication' to be the holotype of *Biziura delantouri*, Forbes 1892, *Nature* 45

(No. 1166) pp. 416-417, collected at Enfield, near Oamaru, South Island, New Zealand.

Conclusion: These nomenclatorial notes do not alter any previous hypothesis which may indicate that the fossil bone from New Zealand could belong to the Recent species *B. lobata* of Australia; they do, however, require that in future the specific name *B. delantouri* be recognized and incorporated into the synonymy of *B. lobata* not only because the type validity is shown to be justified but also to ensure that Forbes' original description is not again overlooked.

As a footnote, I would add that it is surprising to find that no recent author has examined the Pleistocene tarsometatarsus of the palaeospecies *B. exhumata* from Darling Downs, Queensland. De Vis (1889) describes the bone as being only two thirds the size of a ♂ *B. lobata* tarsometatarsus, but a humerus found later in South Australia and attributed also to *B. exhumata* was said (De Vis 1906) to be "larger but not greatly so" than *B. lobata*, a description which could well fit also the New Zealand fossil (Harrison & Walker 1970 p. 10).

References:

- Delacour, J. 1964. *Waterfowl of the world*. Vol. 4. Country Life, London.
De Vis, C. W. 1889. Additions to the list of fossil birds. *Proc. Roy. Soc. Queensland* 6: 55-58.
— 1906. A contribution to the knowledge of the extinct avifauna of Australia. *Ann. Queensland Mus.* 6: 3-25, pl. 4, figs. 1-3.
Forbes, H. O. 1892 (3rd March). On a recent discovery of the remains of extinct birds in New Zealand. *Nature* 45 (No. 1166): 416-418.
— 1892 (18th March). On a recent discovery of the remains of extinct birds in New Zealand. *Science* 19 (No. 476): 163-165.
— 1892 (May). Preliminary notice of additions to the extinct avifauna of New Zealand (abstract). *Trans. N. Z. Inst.* 24: 165-189.
Harrison, C. J. O. & Walker, C. A. 1970. The extinct Musk Duck (*Biziura*) of New Zealand: a re-appraisal of *B. lantouri*. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 90: 6-10.
International Code of Zoological Nomenclature. 1964. London: International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature.
Lambrecht, K. 1933. *Handbuch der Palaeornithologie*. Gerbrüder Borntraeger, Berlin.
Scarlett, R. J. 1969. The occurrence of the Musk Duck *Biziura lobata* (Shaw), in New Zealand. *Notornis* 16: 57-59.

The Cambridge collection from the Malagasy Region

by C. W. Benson

Received 10th October, 1970

Gadow (*Ibis*, 1910: 47-53) has given an account of the ornithological collections in the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge. Mention is made of *The Madagascar Collection*, consisting of 826 skins, made by Sir Edward Newton (brother of Prof. A. Newton). In the present paper reference is made to the more interesting *skins* from the Malagasy Region, using this term in the same sense as in A. L. Thomson (ed.) (*New Dict. Birds*, 1964: 443-444). Gadow also refers to osteological specimens, some of them from Mauritius (see especially E. Newton & Gadow, *Trans. Zool. Soc. Lond.* 13, 1893: 281-302, and Hachisuka, 1953). Such material, not forgetting that also from Rodriguez, is justly famous, but is outside the scope of the present paper. The skin collection actually comprises 1,093 specimens, divisible as follows: Rodriguez 28; Mauritius 222; Réunion 40; Madagascar 562; Comoro Archipelago (Grand Comoro and Anjouan only) 114; Aldabra Archipelago 16; Amirante Islands 7; Seychelles 104. The collection was